

The Bible As One Story

Theme Lesson

PREPARATION

Objective

God reveals his purpose in one central story throughout the Bible.

Outcomes

1. Students will state the main character and purpose of the Bible.
2. Students will identify one Bibleless people group.

Directions

1. Copy the “Key Word Cards,” duplexing them (back to back) onto sturdy paper or card stock. Cut apart to create ten cards.
2. Place these ten cards in a bag or box.
3. Using the “Dot-to-Dot Sample Chart,” draw five large dots on a chalkboard, white board, or chart paper. These dots represent five random locations on the “Key Word Wheel.” Do not draw the spokes or the circles on the wheel.



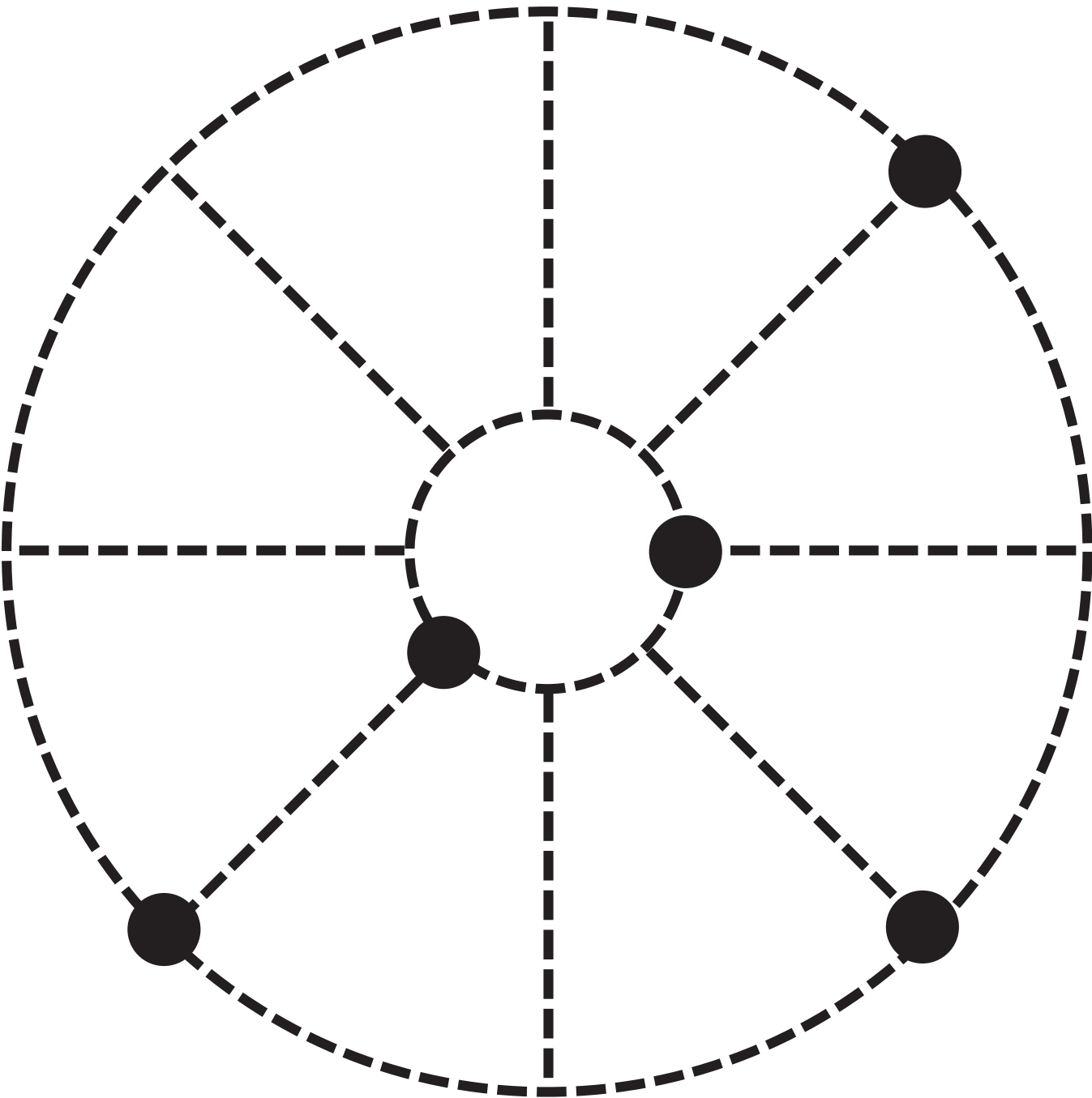
PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- Bibles
- “Dot-to-Dot Sample Chart” (p. 2)
- “Key Word Wheel” poster” (Introduction p. 6)
- “Key Word Cards” (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- “Key Word Purpose Statement” poster (Introduction p. 9)
- cardstock or heavy-weight copier paper
- chalkboard, dry erase board, or large piece of white chart paper
- chalk, dry erase marker, or marker
- bag or small box
- globe or world map
- scissors

Dot-to-Dot Sample Chart



TEACHING (CORE)

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY: DOT-TO-DOT CHALLENGE

Directions

1. Show the students the chart with the dots. Then say, *“I have a ‘Dot-to-Dot Challenge’ for you. Can you tell me how to connect these dots to create one picture or object? Can you tell what it is?”* Invite several students to try joining the dots into a picture. Enjoy the humorous and creative ideas they think of to explain the random dots. Each time, erase the attempt or start over on a new sheet of paper.
2. Finally say, *“I am going to help you out by showing you the rest of the dots needed for you to see what this is all about.”* Use the “Dot-to-Dot Sample Chart” to add the remaining small dots. Then connect them to create the large outer circle, smaller inner circle, and nine-spoke “Key Words Wheel.” Do not add any words, yet.
3. *“Today, this dot-to-dot activity will help us to understand a truth about the Bible, God’s Word.”*

THEME LESSON: STORY OF THE BIBLE

Directions

1. Hold up the Bible. Then ask the students, *“Can you name some stories from the Bible?”* (Have the students name several.) Then ask, *“Do all the stories of the Bible seem to belong together? To many people, the stories of the Bible are like the big dots from earlier – many unconnected stories that do not seem to make sense together. The truth is, however, that all the stories connect together so well, that they form one larger story!”*
2. *“It goes something like this. In the beginning God created people to know him and to give him glory and praise, starting with Adam and Eve. Unfortunately, people sinned and separated themselves from God. Eventually, it became so bad that, at the Tower of Babel, people began to try to make their own name important by building a huge tower. God scattered people over whole the earth, confusing their languages. To this day, many people do not even know God.”*
3. *“The story of the Bible is all about God’s purpose and work.”* Hold up the “Key Word Purpose Statement” poster and read, *“God’s purpose is to make his name known so people from every nation will worship him.”*
4. Say to the students, *“Now think. Who is the main character of the Bible?”* Let students answer. (Some may think it is Adam and Eve ... or people.) Then say, *“God! The Bible is his story. What is the main problem in the story of the Bible?”* Let students share their ideas. Then say, *“The big problem is that people do not know God and bring him glory as God.”*
5. *“To this day many people do not know God or honor him. In fact, many do not even have God’s Word available in their language so they can begin to learn about him. Researchers have studied and counted more than 6,000 languages spoken in the world. Can you guess how many languages the Bible has been translated into for people to read?”* Let a few students

Materials

- chart with five random dots you drew
- “Dot-to-Dot Sample Chart” (p. 2)
- chalk, dry erase marker, or marker

Materials

- Bible
- globe or world map
- “Key Word Wheel” chart you drew in the Pre-Lesson Activity
- “Key Word Cards” in bag or box (Introduction pp. 7-8)
- “Key Word Purpose Statement” poster (Introduction p. 9)
- bag or small box
- marker

guess. Then say, *“Right around 3,000. This means there are still about 3,000 languages needing translation.”*

6. Show students the globe or world map. Point out the following regions and name a people who do not yet have the Bible in their language: Asia, the Dongxiang (**dohng**-shee-ahng) people; Africa, the Temacine (teh-**mah**-seen) people; and Indo/Pacific, the Osing (**oh**-sihng) people.
7. *“Every story in the Bible fits with God’s big story. The ‘Key Words’ help us understand more about how God works to achieve his purpose: to make his name known. These words fit into our chart.”* Put up the “Key Word Wheel” chart you drew in the Pre-Lesson Activity.
8. Hold up the “Key Word” card that says “Purpose.” Read the word and its definition. Use the marker to write the word “purpose” in the center circle on the wheel chart. Then say, *“God’s purpose is central to everything that he does. All of the other ‘Key Words’ explain ways that God works to make his name known so that he receives praise and glory from all people.”*
9. Invite a student to draw a card from the bag or box. Have a leader read the word and definition. Briefly reword each definition so the students understand how it fits with God’s purpose. Finally, read the Bible verse on the back of the card before selecting the next card.
10. Continue, allowing students to pull out and read the cards, one by one. (Print one “Key Word” on each spoke of the “Key Word Wheel” chart.) *“Over the next several weeks, we will be learning more about each of these words.”*

IN CLOSING: REVIEW AND PRAYER

Directions

1. Ask students, *“What is the main story of the Bible? This is also God’s purpose.”* (God wants all people to know him and worship him.) *“Who is the main character?”* (God!)
2. *“Do all people of the world know and honor God?”* (No, some do not even have a Bible in their language yet.) *“Can you name a people without a Bible translation?”* Let the students share their answers. Pray for people of this group, and others, to have God’s Word in their language and to come to know God for themselves.
3. Invite students to consider their own personal response to God. Ask, *“Do you know God? Do you honor him? How can we show him right now that we honor him?”*



HEROES OF HISTORY: WILLIAM TYNDALE

Directions

1. Set the stage for this story. Say, *“The place is England in the early 1500’s. England is ruled by King Henry. A young man named William Tyndale studies at Cambridge College. William loves studying different languages. At college, he first reads the Bible in the original Greek. Tyndale knows that the men, women, and children of England do not have the chance to read the Bible on their own. Both the Catholic Church and the Church of England use the Latin text of the Bible, but the people speak and read English.”*
2. Introduce these vocabulary words:
Pope: head of the Roman Catholic Church, worldwide
Archbishop: head of religious leaders in a state or province
Abbot: head of a monastery, a place for religious study
‘reform’ ideas: ideas about Christianity that were different from those held by the majority of church leaders in the 1500’s; emphasized that salvation came through God’s grace, not through human works.
3. Read the story to your group.
4. Discuss the questions together or in small groups.
5. Together, discover the important role this person had in making God’s name known in all the earth.



PREPARATION: 15 min.

TEACHING: 25 min.

Materials

- “William Tyndale” picture (p. 6)
- “William Tyndale Story” (pp. 7-9)
- “William Tyndale Discussion Questions” (pp. 10-11)

William Tyndale



Vision: The Plow-Boy Challenge

“But, Master Tyndale, why do we have to study these stuffy old Latin verbs?” the little boy complained.

William Tyndale hid a smile. “Because you must learn Latin in order to read the Scriptures,” he said seriously.

“Then why don’t they write the Bible in English?” his pupil grumbled.

“Hush!” said his older brother. “It’s against the law!”

But the boy is right, Tyndale thought to himself. Every man, woman, and child in England, whether rich or poor, should be able to read God’s Word in English—not just hear it read in Latin, which most of them can’t understand. Just then the noise of clumping hooves and rattling wheels could be heard coming up the drive. Guests must be arriving for the noontime meal at Little Sodbury Manor.

William Tyndale had been at Little Sodbury only a short while as tutor for the two sons of Sir John and Lady Anne Walsh. Sir John and Lady Anne were well known for their hospitality, and all sorts of important nobles, ladies, and high-ranking clergy (people who worked for the church) were often gathered around their table. Tyndale enjoyed these meals; the conversations about politics or theology were always lively.

As it turned out, the talk around the Walshes’ table that noon was even more lively than usual. Tyndale listened carefully as the guests argued.

“I hear the pope has said no to King Henry’s request to divorce Queen Catherine. Poor fellow may not get a male heir after all.”

“ ‘Poor fellow,’ indeed! It’s not the queen’s fault that she has given birth to girls. Let Henry pass the crown to the princess!”

“Rubbish. King Henry will get his son — even if he has to leave the Catholic Church to do it!”

An abbot (leader) of the church, dressed in fine clothing and wearing a heavy gold necklace, turned to Tyndale. “Master Tyndale,” he said, “I hear you picked up some ‘reform’ ideas at Cambridge College. What do you think?”

All eyes turned to the young scholar.

“It’s not what I think,” Tyndale said quietly. “It’s what the Scriptures say. Tell me, Abbot, what the Bible says about divorce.”

“Well, I ... I ... it’s up to the pope,” the abbot blustered. “The pope says —”

“We know what the pope says. What do the Scriptures say?”

The abbot grew red. “I will not have a country priest question me!” he thundered.

Tyndale was angry. “That’s because you don’t read the Bible — and the people can’t because the only Bibles we have are written in Latin. We need an English version that can be read by king and common person alike.”

The two Walsh boys looked at each other wide-eyed. What was Master Tyndale saying? Didn’t he know it was against the law?

William Tyndale pointed a finger at the abbot. “If God spares my life, before many years pass I will help the boy behind the plow to know more of the Scriptures than you do!”

Patience: Burn the Books

The archbishop of Canterbury looked up from his desk. “Well, what is it?” he said to his secretary.

The secretary placed two leather-bound books on the archbishop’s desk. “We have found two more copies of Williams Tyndale’s English New Testament — from two different towns.”

“What? I thought we ordered the booksellers not to sell these illegal books!” the archbishop said.

“But everyone is buying them. The booksellers are making good money,” admitted the secretary.

The archbishop grabbed one of the books and opened it. “See here! He translated this word as ‘repentance,’ not ‘penance.’ If the people don’t pay penance for their sins, the church will soon go broke. We must stop this right away!”

The archbishop paced back and forth behind his desk. “Obviously, our raids on the merchant ships have not stopped the shipment of these books into England ... and as long as the booksellers are making money, they will sell them behind our backs.” Suddenly the archbishop stopped pacing and a sly smile lit up his puffy face. “I know! We will buy up these New Testaments ourselves — all of them! Then we will destroy them. That will keep them out of the hands of the common people!”

It seemed like a good plan. The archbishop’s men, acting like ordinary customers, visited all the booksellers and bought copies of Tyndale’s New Testament. They did not threaten the booksellers because they

wanted the booksellers to sell them as many copies as possible.

When the archbishop’s men could find no more copies of the English New Testament, the archbishop ordered a big bonfire to be built. When the flames were roaring, his men threw all the books onto the fire.

“We’ve outsmarted that Tyndale now!” The archbishop laughed gleefully.

In Germany, Humphrey Monmouth, one of the shipping merchants who helped smuggle William Tyndale’s New Testaments into England, told his friend about the archbishop’s bonfire.

William Tyndale nodded thoughtfully. “Well, we still have the printed plates,” he sighed. “I guess we have to start all over again — but it will take a while to raise the money for another printing.”

A big grin spread over Humphrey Monmouth’s face — and then he threw back his head and laughed out loud. Tyndale looked surprised; then his mouth dropped open as the stout merchant drew a leather bag of coins from his coat ... then another, and another, and another.

“What’s this?” Tyndale cried.

“Ha, ha — ho, ho,” laughed Monmouth. “This is your share of the money from all the books that the archbishop bought — for an even larger printing!”

William Tyndale laughed, too. “No one can stop God — not even the archbishop!”

Faith: The False Friend

What’s the news from the king?” William Tyndale asked his host eagerly. “Did King Henry see my New Testament?”

Thomas Poyntz, an English merchant who had just returned to his home in Antwerp, Belgium, shook his head. “The news isn’t good, my friend. The king rejected your English New Testament. He said it ‘wasn’t needed.’ Not only that, but the hunt to find you has spread all over Europe. You must be very, very careful.”

William Tyndale nodded. “I’m sure I will be safe here — thanks to your kindness. There are many foreigners in Antwerp. No one will notice me — especially since I spend most of my time in your attic working on my translation of the Old Testament.”

As the two men said good-night, Tyndale added, “Oh, I almost forgot. Our young friend from the university, Henry Phillips, is coming for lunch next week. Will you be here?”

Thomas Poyntz frowned. “Unfortunately, no. I have another trip next week. But ... I wish you would not see anyone while I am gone. It is too dangerous.”

Tyndale patted his friend on the arm. “Come, come. Surely you are not worried about young Henry. He’s very charming. He seems interested in our reform ideas.”

“Too charming,” worried Poyntz. “To me he rings as false as a counterfeit coin.”

The next week, Henry Phillips knocked on the door of the Poyntz home. “Is Thomas here?” asked the handsome young man when William Tyndale answered the door.

“No, he is out of town,” said Tyndale. “But we can still have lunch together.”

“Say, I have an idea,” said Phillips. “Why don’t we go into the town for lunch. I have an errand to do on the way — that is, if you don’t mind.”

“Not at all,” said Tyndale. “Let me get my cloak and hat.”

As the two men walked the cobblestone streets, they came to a narrow alley, wide enough for only one person at a time. Phillips politely motioned for Tyndale to go ahead. As Tyndale came to the end of the alley, he was surprised to see two soldiers waiting at the other end. He started to turn back, but he saw Henry Phillips pointing at him. “This is the man — arrest him!” the young man cried.

William Tyndale had been betrayed!

For almost a year and a half, Tyndale sat in Antwerp’s Vilvoord Prison, while Thomas Poyntz made many efforts to get him released. But in August 1536, William Tyndale was condemned as a heretic (someone who teaches something that goes against what a church believes) — to be strangled and burned at the stake.

As his sad friends gathered in October to see his heroic end, Tyndale lifted his face up to God and cried out, “O God! Open the King of England’s eyes!”

Less than a year later, Thomas Poyntz received amazing news from England. A man named Miles Coverdale had published the first ever complete Bible in English — largely based on William Tyndale’s work — and King Henry VIII had given it his stamp of approval! Not only that, but by 1539, every parish church in England was required to make copies available to its people.

William Tyndale’s prayer of faith had been answered!

William Tyndale Discussion Questions

WILLIAM TYNDALE, PART 1 – VISION: THE PLOW-BOY CHALLENGE

Vision is seeing beyond “the way things are” to what needs to be done.

From God’s Word

“Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18a, KJV).

Let’s Talk About It

1. Why do you think the priests didn’t want the Bible to be printed in a language the common people could read for themselves?
2. How do you think William Tyndale was going to help the “boy behind the plow” know more about the Scriptures than the priests?
3. Thank God that you have a Bible to read in your own language. Do you have an “extra” Bible at your house you could give to someone who doesn’t have one?

WILLIAM TYNDALE, PART 2 – PATIENCE: BURN THE BOOKS!

Patience is knowing that, in the long run, God’s work will be done, in spite of obstacles and setbacks.

From God’s Word

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).

Let’s Talk About It

1. Why was William Tyndale going to print more English New Testaments, even after the archbishop burned most of the copies from the first printing?
2. How did the archbishop’s plan backfire?
3. When you try to do something good for God and it doesn’t seem to work, why is it important to have patience?

William Tyndale Discussion Questions, continued

WILLIAM TYNDALE, PART 3 – FAITH: THE FALSE FRIEND

Faith is the ability to leave unfinished work in God's hands.

From God's Word

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1).

Let's Talk About It

1. What did William Tyndale mean when he prayed, “Open the King of England's eyes”?
2. Even though Tyndale died before his work on the English Bible was finished, how did God answer his prayer?
3. Are you feeling discouraged about something that seems unfinished that you can't do yourself? Together as a group, pray a prayer of faith, leaving it in God's hands.